

Verb Structure in Indonesian

B.R. Suryo Baskoro

I. Introduction

One of the major problems in studying Indonesian as a foreign language is mastering the verb structure. This is due to the complexity of its affixation. A good and well-formed verb will ensure a good, formal, and acceptable sentence; on the contrary, a lack of affixes where it should be, will give a non-grammatical sentence.

Indonesian verbs have two structures: simple and derived verbs.

II. Simple Verbs

example:

- (1). Dia akan datang pukul 10.00.
'She/he will come at 10.00'
others : ada (be/be present, there is/are), mandi (take bath) pergi (go), tidur (sleep), etc.
note : addition of affixes will evoke changes of meaning and syntactical possibilities
- (2). Jono bangun terlambat
Jono woke up late'
—> Jono membangunkan (wake s.o. up) adiknya pukul 05.00
- (3). Slamet datang dengan Pardi
Slamet came with Pardi'
—> Slamet mendatangkan (had s. o. brought in) dokter.
—> Slamet mendatangi (visit) Pardi.
(see further annex 2)

III. Derived Verbs

A. Intransitive

1. **BER-**, means:

1.1 'mempunyai' (to have):

(4) Tari bercita-cita menjadi dokter.

Tari has ideal to become a doctor'

others: beratap (roof), beristeri (wife),

berkeinginan (desire), etc.

1.2 'menggunakan' (to use):

(5) Tini bersepeda ke sekolah

'Tini uses a bicycle to go to school'

'Tini goes to school by bicycle'

others : bersepatu (shoes), berperahu

(boat).

exception: 'berbis (bus), 'berandong,

'berbecak.

1.3 'menghasilkan' (to produce):

(6) Ayam saya bertelur banyak.

'My hen produced many eggs'

others : berbunyi (sound), berkeringat

(sweat).

1.4 'timpunan' (collection):

(7) Mereka pergi berdua, berdua, berempat.

'They went the two, three, four'

1.5 reflexive:

(8) Kami berlindung di bawah pohon.

'We took shelter under a tree'

1.6 'melakukan pekerjaan' (to do s.t.):

(9) Anak-anak bermain bola.

'The children are playing ball'

Notes:

a. Some verbs might have a double interpretation:

(10) Wanita itu beranak lima.

'The woman has 5 children'

Wanita itu beranak di rumah sakit.

'The woman bore a child in the hospital'

b. Assimilation of 'r' in **ber-**:

-ajar --> belajar (learn) bahasa Indonesia

-when the first syllable of the root has also 'r',

ex. : pergi --> bepergian, not 'berpergian

terbang --> beterbangan, not *berterbangan,

but lari --> berlarian, not *belarian
(see further ber-/an)

c. Some ber- have its own meaning:

(11) Ayah bekerja sampai larut.

'Papa worked late'

Others:

bersekolah (go to school), berdiri (stand),
bertemu (meet), berbelanja (to shop), ber-
bicara (speak, talk), berkumpul (gather
together), bertanya (ask), etc.

2. BER-/AN (limited number), means:

2.1 (root) in various ways:

(12) Daun-daun berjatuh/berguguran.

'The leaves are falling down'

Others:

beterbangan (fly), berdatangan, berlarian
(run), bepergian (go), etc.

2.2 reciprocally:

(13) Mereka berjauhan (be far from e.o.).

'They are far from each other'

Others:

berdekatan (near), bersamaan (at the
same time), bersebelahan (side by side),
berseberangan (opposite), bermesraan
(intimate with), bermusuhan (be enemies), etc.

note:

sometimes accompanied by a reciprocal
marker saling (each other)

Mereka saling bermusuhan

'They are enemies each other'

(14) contrast of:

ME-	BER-/AN
lamemeluk (embrace)	--> Mereka <u>berpelukan</u> (embrace e.o.)
anakrya	--> berhadapan
menghadap (face)	--> berbalasan
membalas (answer, reply)	--> berpukulan
memukul (hit)	

3. BER- AND -AN

refers to: semi-transitivity (needs a
complement).

(15) contrast:

BER-	BER-/KAN
	(have)
Orang itu <u>bersenjata</u> (be armed)	--> Orang itu <u>bersenjatakan</u> pistol (be armed with s.t.)
beristeri	--> beristerikan [orang Jawa]
beribu (mother)	--> beribukan [wanita Sunda]

berdasar (basis) --> berdasarkan (Pancasila)

4. TER- (limited number) means:

4.1 become in the state of <root>

(16) duduk --> Petinju itu terduduk di sudut.

'The boxer fell to a seated
position in the corner'

jatuh (fall) --> terjatuh

tidur (sleep) --> tertidur

4.2 other meanings (base: perfective)

4.2.1 'paling' (superlative):

(17) Ia adalah mahasiswa terbaik.

'She is the best student'

4.2.2 perfective:

(18) Mainan itu terbuat dari plastik.

'The toy is made of plastic'

4.2.3 continuative:

(19) Tubuhnya terapung.

'His body is floating'

4.2.4 intense:

(20) Mereka tergesa-gesa (in a hurry).

'They in a hurry'

5. KE-/AN

means: affected by something unpleasant <root>

(21) malam --> Gadis itu kemalaman.

'The girl was overtaken by night'

others:

siang (noon) --> kesiangan

dingin (cold) --> kedinginan

panas (hot) --> kepanasan

lapar (hungry) --> kelaparan

haus (thirsty) --> kehausan

tidur (sleep) --> ketiduran

note:

compare ke-/an as verb and as noun.

(22) Ia kelaparan (V) pada siang hari

'He is really hungry at midday'

Kelaparan (N) melanda negeri itu

'Hunger is attacking the country'

6. ME(N)-, means:

6.1 'melakukan' (do s.t.):

(23) Mereka menari dan menyanyi.

'They are dancing and singing'

6.2 'menjadi, menjadi seperti' (be
come/become like):

(24) Pohon-pohon menghijau (turn green).

'The trees are turning green'

others:

batu (stone) → membatu
akar (root) → mengakar
kecil (small) → mengecil
buruk (bad) → memburuk

6.3 'berfungsi sebagai' (function as):

(25) Wanita itu menjanda.

'The woman is widowed'

6.4 'minum, makan, membuat' (drink, eat, make s.t.):

(26) Ayah mengopi (root: kopi) di teras.

'Papa is drinking coffee at the terrace'

others:

bakso (meatballs) → membakso
sambal (spicy sauce) → menyambal sauce

6.5 'menuju ke' (go in the direction of):

(27) Pesawat itu terlambat mengudara (air).

'The aeroplane took off late'

others:

darat (land) → mendarat
tepi (side) → menepi
rakyat (people) → merakyat

6.6 'mencari, mengumpulkan' (look for, assemble):

(28) Kerbau (water buffalo) itu merumput (grass) sampai sore

rotan (rattan) → merotan

6.7 'mengeluarkan bunyi' (to sound):

(29) Kucing mengong, tikus mendit

'Cats mew and mice squeak'

note:

me(N)- in single syllabic roots become menge-:

(30) ik → mengelik (type a paper) → ?menik
bom → mengebom (bomb) → ?membom
cek → mengecek (check out) → ?mencak
pel → mengapel (mop) → ?mempel
rem → megerem (put on the brakes) → ?merem

B. Transitive

1. ME(N)-, means:

'melakukan tindakan' (do s.t.):

(31) Polisi mengejar (root: kejar) pencuri itu.

'The policeman is running after the thief'

others:

ajar → mengajar (teach)
bakar → membakar (burn)
bentur → membentur (collide/crash)
celup → mencelup (dip)

ejek → mengejek (mock)
gubris → menggubris (heed)
hela → menghela (pull)
idap → mengidap (ail)
jaga → menjaga (watch over)
kelola → mengelola (manage)
kenang → mengenang (reminisce about)

pukul → memukul (hit)
parkir → memarkir (park)
sangkal → menyangkal (deny)
tinju → meninju (punch)

note:

for tinggal →

<root> : la tinggal (stay) di desa.

me(N)- : Ibu sudah meninggal (passed away)

me-/kan : Ibu meninggalkan (leave) saya.

2. MEMPER-, means:

2.1 'melakukan' (do s.t.)

(32) Kami memperjuangkan kemerdekaan.

'We are struggling for peace'.

but *menjuangkan.

mempemalahkan or memasalahkan
(question s.t.)

mempenisteri (take s.o. as wife), but

*mengisteri

*menyumi (husband)

2.2 'membuat menjadi lebih' (make s.t.)

more <root>:

(33) indah → Dekorasi itu memperindah
(beautiful) rumah

cantik → mempersantik (pretty)

sulit → mempersulit (difficult)

note:

a. Deletion of "more" meaning needs use of me-/kan:

(34) sulit → menyulitkan (make s.t. difficult)
lelah → melelahkan (tired)

b. Contrast of me-/kan and memper-/kan:

(35)
tunjuk → menunjukkan (point out) → mempertunjuk-
kan (show)

tanya → menanyakan (ask) → mempertanya-
kan (question about)

dengar → mendengarkan (listen to) → memperdengar-
kan (let s.t. be heard
or listened to)

lihat → melihat (see) → memperlihatkan kan
(show, display)

tahan → menahan (hold back) → mempertahankan

kan (defend).

(see further annex 3!)

3. ME(N)/-KAN, means:

3.1 become more (in characteristic):

(36) panas (hot) → memanaskan (to heat)

lebar (wide) → melebarkan (to widen s.t.)

panjang (long) → memanjangkan (to lengthen)

Ibu memanaskan kopi.

'Mama is heating the coffee'

note:

a. Contrast of me(N)/-kan and memper-

ex.:

melebarkan : to widen s.t. which is not wide (yet).

memperlebar : to widen s.t. already wide

b. Contrast of me(N)- and me(N)/-kan,

ex.:

mengering (Intr) : to dry out (of s.t. wet).

mengeringkan (tr) : to dry s.t. out/to drain.

3.2 to bring to...

(37) masuk (in) → memasukkan (to enter)

keluar (out) → mengeluarkan (to put outside)

tempat (place) → menempatkan (put s.t. in a certain place)

Ayah mengeluarkan mobil dari garasi.

'Papa put the car outside the garage'

'Papa took the car from the garage'

3.3 to make s.t. become <root>:

(38) senang (happy) → menyenangkan (to please)

bahaya (danger) → membahayakan (to endanger)

gelisah (nervous) → menggelisahkan (to upset)

nerak (surprised) → mengherankan (to surprise)

lelah (tired) → melelahkan (to tire s.o.)

pusing (dizzy) → memusingkan (to make dizzy)

note:

There are two meanings of this me(N)/-kan:

a. transitively = to do something (as 3.3):

(39) Tariannya mengagumkan penonton

'Her dance amazed the audience'

b. intransitively (= quasi-adjective):

(40) Tariannya benar-benar mengagumkan

'Her dance is really amazing'

3.4 benefactive (to do for s.o. else), Semantical & structural contrast of:

me(N)- and me(N)/-kan

(41) Ia membeli buku → Ia membeli adiknyanya buku

S V O S V ind O dir O

(She bought a book) (She bought her brother a book) (= Ia membeli buku untuk (for) adiknya)

membaca → membacakan (read)

menulis → menuliskan (write)

membawa → membawakan (bring)

3.5 'menyuruh seseorang melakukan' (ask s.o. to do <root>), Semantical contrast of:

me(N)- and me(N)/-kan

(42)

Ibu menjahit baju → Ibu menjahitkan baju

(Mom sewed the clothing) (Mom had the clothing sewn)

peniksa → memeriksa (examine) → memeriksakan

bengkel → membengkelkan (repair (a car)) → mem bengkel

tik → mengetik (type (a letter)) → mengetikkan

4. ME(N)/-I, means:

4.1 to do s.t.:

(43) dekat (near) → Anak itu mendekati meja

'The boy is approaching the table'

jauh (far) → menjauhi (keep away from)

note:

a. Contrast of me(N)/-i and me(N)/-kan:

(locative)

(causative)

dekat → mendekati → Ibu mendekatkan (bring s.t. close) gelas pada adik

jauh → menjauhi → menjauhkan (keep s.t. away)

jatuh → menjatuhkan (fall on s.t.) → menjatuhkan (drop s.t.)

datang → mendatangi (come closer) → mendatangkan (bring s.t. in)

masuk → memasuki (enter) → memasukkan (enter s.t. in)

b. me(N)/-i = <root> + preposition

(44) Presiden menghadiri (attend) pesta itu

→ Presiden hadir pada (be present at) pesta itu

Ia menyadari (realize) kesalahannya (fault)

→ Ia sadar akan (be aware of) kesalahannya

Adik sangat menyayangi (love) mainannya (toy)

→ Adik sangat sayang pada mainannya

c. Contrast of:

(root)	intr.	tr.	bi-tr.
dekat ----> Kapal itu mendekat (The ship is approaching)	----> S mendekat pantai (approach s.t.)	----> S mendekatkan /s.t. to s.o/ (bring s.t. close)	
jauh ----> Mobil itu menjauh	----> S menjauhi kami	----> S menjauhkan /s.t. from s.o/	

@	me(N)-	me(N)-i	me(N)-kan
Dia dekat sini (He's near here)	Dia mendekat kepada kami (He come close to us)	Dia mendekati kami (He is approaching us)	Dia mendekatkan kursi itu (He bought the chair closer)
Ayah jauh dari kami (Papa's far from us)	Kapai itu menjauh (S drew farther away)	Kapai itu menjauhi pantai (S went far from the beach)	Kami menjauhkan meja darinya (S removed V from him)
Mereka datang kemarin (They came yesterday)	-	la mendatangi rumah saya (He came to my house)	Mereka mendatangkan dokter. (They had the doctor come)
Rumah saya kecil (My house is small)	Sepatu saya mengecil (My shoes became small)	-	la mengedikan suara (She lowered the voice)
Pohon itu besar (The tree is big)	Perutnya membesar (His stomach became big)	-	la membesarkan rumahnya (He enlarged his house)
Jangan masuk! (Don't enter!)	-	Presiden memasuki ruangan (S is entering the room)	la memasukkan mobilnya (He brought the car in)
Gajinya naik (His salary raised)	-	la menaiki gunung itu (S climbed on the mountain)	la menaikkan tasnya (He lift his bag)
Dia duduk (He's sitting)	-	Anak itu menduduki meja (S sat on the table)	Ayah mendudukkan adik (Papa seated my sister)
- singkir	Orang itu menyinkir (S is stepping aside)	la menyinkir saya (S stayed away from me)	la menyinkirkan bukunya (She removed her book)
- hindar	Dia selalu menghindar	Mereka menghindari bahaya	la menghindarkan saya dari api

4.2. repetitive:

- (45) pukul --> la memukul (hit again and again) meja
angkat --> Anak-anak mengangkat (lift up) kursi

- masuk (enter) --> dimasuki --> Rumahnya kamasukan
pencuri
(A thief got into his house)
hujan (rain) --> diujani --> la kehujanan
(He got caught in rain)
copet (pickpocket) --> dicopet --> la kecopetan dompetnya
(His wallet was stolen)

C. PASSIVE

1. DI-

Contrast of:

active and passive:
beli --> la membeli buku

dinta --> la mendinta ayahnya

ajar --> la mempelajari tatabahasa

ingat --> la memperingatkan anaknya

(He warned his son)

Buku itu sudah
dibeli orang
(S have been
bought by s.o.)
la dicintai (oleh)
semua orang
(S is loved by
everyone)
Tatabahasa
dipelajainya
(Grammar is being
studied by him)
la diperingatkan
oleh ayahnya
(He was warned
by his father)

2. KE-/-AN

(basic structure: di-/-i),

meaning: be (root) unpleasantly

jatuh (fall) --> dijatuhi --> Kepalanya kejatuhan mangga
(S was hit by a falling
mango)

habis (finished) --> dihabisi --> la kehabisan uang
(He ran out of money)

3. TER-

3.1 (passive) 'tidak sengaja' (unintentional); compare:

(46) Bukunya ditinggal (left intentionally) di meja
Bukunya tertinggal (left unintentionally) di meja.

3.2 (passive) 'dapat di' (potential):

(47) Tulisan itu (writing) terbaca (can be read).

3.3 spontaneous:

(48) Ibu terkejut (surprised) mendengar berita itu.

3.4 'keadaan' (situation/state):

contrast:

(49) Pintu itu ditutup (was opened by) orang

Pintu itu tertutup (is the state of closed)

ANNEX 1

Abbreviations

e.o. : each other
etc. : et cetera
s.o. : someone
s.t. : something

OF (SOME) SIMPLE VERBS

bangkit : get up (from seated position)	lari : run	pingsan : unconscious
bangun : wake up	lenyap : dissappeared	pulang : return home
benci : hate	lewat : via, through, by way of	punya : have
cinta : love	lulus : pass (a test)	putus : broken off
diam : be silent	lunas : paid	rugi : suffer a fi- nancial loss
duduk : sit	lupa : forget	sadar : conscious
gagal : fail	luput : not on target	sakit : ill, sick
gugur : fall (of leaves) (prematurely)	makan : eat	sampai : arrive
habis : finished	mandi : take a bath	sayang : love
hadir : be present	masuk : enter	selesai : finished
hidup : live	mati : die	singgah : stop by/in
hilang : be lost	mau : will, wish, want	surut : withdraw
ikut : follow, go along	minta : ask, beg	tahu : know
ingat : remember	minum : drink	tampak : appear, be visible
ingin : wish, desire	mohon : request, ask	tampi : step forward
jadi : become, get	mulai : begin	terbang : fly
jatuh : fall	muncul : appear	terjun : jump down
karam : founder	mundur : go back	tiba : arrive
keluar : go out	naik : climb, go up	turun : go down, descend
kembali : return	patah : broken	yakin : sure
kenai : know	percaya : believe	etc.
lahir : be born	pergi : go	etc.
	pindah : move	etc.

ANNEX 3 VERBAL AFFIXATION

ROOT	BER-	ME(N)-	ME(N)-I-	ME(N)-KAN	MEMPER-(-I)	MEMPER-KAN
ajar	belajar (study)	mengajar (teach)	mengajari (teach, train)	mengajarkan (teach s.t.)	mempelajari	
dagang	berdagang (trade)					memperdagangkan (trade in s.t.)
baik		membaik (improve)			memperbaiki (improve, repair)	
banyak		menambah (increase)			memperbanyak (multiply)	
beli		membeli (buy)		membelikan (buy for)		
buruk		memburuk (worsen)			memperburuk (aggravate)	
cepat		mencepat (become fast)			mempercepat (accelerate)	
dagang	berdagang (trade)					memperdagangkan (trade in s.t.)
ingat		mengingat (remember)		mengingatkan (remind)	memperingati (commemorate)	memperingatkan (warn)

ROOT	BER-	ME(N)-	ME(N)-I-	ME(N)-KAN	MEMPER-(-I)	MEMPER-KAN
isteri	beristeri (have a wife)				memperisteri (take s.o. a wife)	
jelas		menjelas (become clear)		menjelaskan (explain)	memperjelas (clarify)	
juang	berjuang (struggle)					memperjuangkan (struggle for)
taruh	bertaruh (bet)					mempertaruhkan (pawn)